

Warrants SEP 8 1972 Issued in Murders

Murder warrants have been obtained by Oakland police against Glenn Bailey, 32, of 9248 C St., Oakland, and Aaron Lee Owens, 28, of 445 South 9th St., Richmond.

Bailey is already in the Alameda County Jail awaiting trial for robbery while Owens is in the Contra Costa County Jail awaiting trial on narcotics violations and for being an ex-convict with a gun.

The warrants charge the two men with the slaying last May 13 of Marie Collins, 24, and Stanford Bryant, 42, at their Rockridge district apartment at 333 Florence Ave.

Murder Suspect Guilty Of Robbery, Assault

SEP 16 1972

Glenn Bailey, 30, of 9248 C St., who is charged with the death of his partner in a robbery, was convicted yesterday of nine felony counts of robbery and assault with a deadly weapon after a four-day trial in Alameda County Superior Court.

The jury which convicted Bailey did not know that the murder charge has been filed against Bailey.

Two masked men last March 30 held up some 30 employees at the McKesson-Robbins pharmaceutical warehouse at 831 Castro St., making off with a valuable quantity of pure cocaine.

An eyewitness later identified Stanford Bryant, 42, of 333 Florence Ave., as one of the robbers. Bailey was charged eight days ago with murdering Bryant on May 13. But the jury was not told of the murder charge by Asst. Dist. Att. William A. McKinstry so as not to prejudice the case against Bailey.

During the trial, Bailey's wife testified that Bailey was at home with her on March 30, the day of the robbery. She said it was his birthday.

But the state produced evidence that in another court proceeding 12 years ago, Bailey told a judge his birthday was May 17, 1942.

A state fingerprinting expert also testified that Bailey's fingerprints were on a

container of masking tape used in the cocaine robbery.

Judge Harold B. Hove, who heard the case, set Oct. 6 for sentencing. Bailey could be sent to prison for from 10 years to life.

Police said that Bryant was murdered several days after he bought a \$7,000 car for a girl friend. They theorized that he was murdered because his gift might put police on his trail.

Bryant and Marie Collins, 24, were both murdered at 333 Florence Ave. Miss Collins, police said, was involved in narcotics traffic in Alameda County and was awaiting trial on narcotics charges when she was slain.

Pair to Stand Trial in May Dual Slaying

NOV 30 1972

Glenn Bailey, 30, who is charged with murdering an alleged partner in a pharmaceutical warehouse robbery and a 24-year-old woman, has been ordered to stand trial in Alameda County Superior Court.

Aaron Lee Owens, 28, of 445 South 9th St., Richmond, also charged with the pair's murder, also was bound over to stand trial by Municipal Court Judge Jacqueline Taber.

Both are scheduled to be arraigned Dec. 7 in Superior Court.

Bailey, of 9248 C St., and Owens are accused in the May 13 slaying of Marie Collins, 24, and Stanford Bryant, 42, in a Rockridge district apartment.

Police believe Bryant was Bailey's partner in the holdup of McKesson-Robbins warehouse at 831 Castro St. in which a valuable quantity of pure cocaine was taken.

Bailey was sentenced to 10 years to life in prison after his conviction Sept. 15 in Superior Court on nine felony counts of robbery and assault with a deadly weapon for his part in the warehouse robbery.

Both Bailey and Owens are held without bail.

2 Convicted Of Slaying Dope Sellers

MAR 7 1973

An Oakland man and a Sunnyvale companion have been convicted of first-degree murder in the shotgun and pistol deaths of accused narcotics dealer Marie Collins, 24, and Stanford Bryant, 42, in a house on a quiet Rockridge District street last May 13.

The jury verdict was returned to Superior Court Judge Alan Lindsay to cap a trial that started Jan. 30.

The convictions on the double counts were obtained by Deputy Dist. Atty. John Taylor against Glenn Bailey, 32, of 9248 C St., and Aaron Lee Owen, 29, of Sunnyvale.

Judge Lindsay set March 26 for sentence.

The murders occurred at 333 Florence Ave. Neighbors working in their yards saw two men in stocking masks run and jump into a white getaway car.

Bailey was a partner of Bryant. Mrs. Collins had been arrested and faced trial in a series of narcotics cases. Police ascribed the shootings, in which the life of a 2-year-old boy was threatened, to a grudge over narcotics deals.

Killer of Drug Seller Given 10 to Life

MAR 28 1973
Glenn Bailey, 32, convicted of slaying two narcotics dealers, has been sentenced to prison for 10-years to life. The term is to be served in addition to an earlier 10-year to life term for two armed holdups.

Bailey's codefendant in the murders, Aaron Lee Owen, 29, of Sunnyvale, is to be sentenced April 4.

They were found guilty of first degree murder in the shotgun-pistol deaths of Marie Collins, 24, and Stanford

Bryant, 42, last May 13 at 333 Florence Ave.

The slayings were ascribed by police to a grudge over narcotics deals. Mrs. Collins faced a series of charges on narcotics violations. She was on bail on several of the counts and was living in the house in the Rockridge District when slain with Bryant, who was a partner of Bailey's.

Superior Court Judge Alan A. Lindsay made Bailey's murder convictions — run concurrently but provided that both of them be consecutive to the armed robbery conviction.

Dope Feud Slayer Gets Life Term

APR - 5 1973

Aaron Lee Owen, 29, was sentenced yesterday to state prison for life for his part in the narcotics feud assassination of two accused dealers in a Rockridge District neighborhood last May 13.

Owen's companion, Glenn Bailey, 32, was sentenced to two life terms March 26 for the slayings of Marie Collins, 24, and Stanford Bryant, 42.

The victims died under a blast of shotgun and pistol fire at 333 Florence Ave.

Superior Court Judge Alan A. Lindsay, before whom the jury trial was held, denied motions for a new trial and probation. Owen was convicted in both deaths and with being armed and using a weapon, possessing a gun as an ex-convict and having a prior conviction.

Bailey's sentence was stacked upon an earlier conviction for the robbery of a pharmaceutical supply house in which a large amount of narcotics was stolen.

An innocent man's victory

By Del Lane
Tribune Staff Writer

MAR 5 1981

A former Alameda County prosecutor has won the freedom of the man he successfully tried for murder in 1973.

John Taylor, now an attorney in private practice at Lake Tahoe, was told in 1979 by a co-defendant of Aaron Lee Owens, that Owens, 37, was wrongfully convicted of helping murder two people in what appeared to be a grudge over drug transactions.

The co-defendant, Glenn Bailey, gave Taylor this information during a parole hearing and followed up with a letter last year to the Alameda County district attorney's office.

Bailey later supplied Taylor with the name of his actual accomplice and the names of

several other people who, he said, knew the identity of that man.

Taylor was redeputized, assigned an investigator and reopened the case.

On Wednesday, Don Whyte, an Alameda County deputy district attorney, appeared before the state Board of Prison Terms at San Quentin, told the board of the circumstances and asked that the case be returned to the original trial court for further consideration.

"I understand that a letter has been sent returning jurisdiction to Alameda County Superior Court," Whyte said Wednesday night. "When that arrives, I will ask the sheriff to remove Owens from San Quentin and take him

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before the original trial judge, Alan Lindsay."

At that point, Whyte said, he will recommend that the jury verdict be vacated and move that the charges be dismissed.

"I expect Owens to be free at the very latest by early next week," he said.

In his report to the prison terms board, Taylor said Owens was the victim of "several incredibly coincidental occurrences."

Among those, said Whyte, is the fact that police identification photos show a remarkable physical resemblance between Owens and the actual suspect, to the extent that "they could be twin brothers, almost."

Because of that resemblance, Whyte said, Owens was positively identified as one of the killers by a witness who "simply made an honest mistake."

The other coincidences, Whyte said, were contained in "a lot of small bits of circumstantial evidence."

He said Owens' case was further damaged by the fact that he did not testify in his own behalf at his trial, "which is unusual for an innocent man." But, Whyte said, Owens made that choice because he had once been convicted of possessing a sawed-off

shotgun — the same kind of weapon used to kill one of the victims.

The victims were Marie Collins, 24, and Stanford Bryant, 42, who were shot to death on May 13, 1972, in an apartment in Oakland's Rockridge district.

Owens was sentenced to life and Bailey sentenced to two life terms.

Whyte termed Owens' conviction a "one-in-a-million shot — I never expect to see it happen again."

And Taylor's of involvement in reopening the case, Whyte said, "A situation like this has never happened. At the time, Taylor had some misgivings about the case, nothing he could really put his finger on. After Bailey talked to him, he acted through a sense of moral responsibility."

As for Bailey's true accomplice, Whyte said, "We have the name of an individual, but the state of the evidence in the case is such that we will probably never be able to proceed against him."

Of Owens, Whyte said, "He has a remarkable attitude. He just accepted conviction for a crime he didn't commit as the way life is. I couldn't do that. I don't know why he didn't go crazy during all those years in prison."

Lawyer, wrongly convicted man crumble society's walls

By Kevin Fagan
Tribune staff writer

Bailey, Glenn

SUN APR 26 1992

THIS IS A TALE of opposites attracting, of justice hard won, and of a friendship that blossomed through the years despite all odds.

On one side is a comparatively rich white lawyer named John Taylor. On the other is a poor black man named Aaron Owens, whom Taylor put behind bars for life for a brutal shotgun double murder two decades ago.

Taylor was a hot prosecutor, the Alameda County district attorney's best. He nailed Owens easily, leaving no doubt in the jurors' minds with pinpoint witness descriptions and bloody evidence.

The only trouble was that Owens was innocent. And he almost died for the mistake.

Had the killings happened just months earlier, Owens probably would have been sentenced to choke in the gas chamber. But as fate would have it, the state Supreme Court overturned the death penalty

that year — 1972 — and Owens wound up instead doing a life term in San Quentin state prison.

That meant that nine long years later, when Taylor went to Owens' parole hearing to make sure the "murderer" wouldn't be freed, the then-convict was able to look Taylor straight in the face for the first time since his arrest. And Owens was able to say one simple thing he had never seriously told him: "I didn't do it."

"I said, 'Right — save it for the other cons,'" Taylor said recently in the Walnut Creek office where he now has a private law practice. "But then I looked in his eyes, and suddenly I could see he was telling the truth.

"And I thought, 'Oh, my God.'"

Thus began a legal roller coaster that resulted, two years later in 1981, in Taylor winning a courtroom fight to get Owens freed. And today, almost exactly 20 years after the messy May 13, 1972, drug-killing that sent them both on a collision

course with fate, they are fast friends.

They go to Oakland A's baseball games together. They share a beer now and then, or catch lunch on the lawn at some local park. They toy with writing a book about their lives, and Taylor helps Owens out whenever he needs a lawyer.

Owens, well-muscled and lean at the age of 49, still lives much as he did before: He rents a tiny apartment west of San Pablo Avenue on the tattered side of Berkeley, where he earns a small income caring for a quadriplegic woman.

And Taylor, a slimmer man of 50 who sports a neat, gray beard, lives as he always did, in a big house in the Eastbay hills, married to a local judge. He wants for little and picks and chooses legal cases from his sparkling Walnut Creek office.

But when the two get together, the walls of money, attitude and racism that would divide lesser men

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elt away.
"Hey, bro'," Taylor snapped
kingly as Owens walked into
s office on a recent warm af-
noon — half an hour late, as
often is. "You (wasting time)
ain?"
Their eyes met, as clear and
understanding as that day in
San Quentin when Owens
ocked Taylor with the truth,
and they both grinned widely.
"You're an ass . . . , and you
ways were," Owens roared,
apping Taylor on the arm.
ood to see you, too."

You'd think that in all those
and prison years, Owens would
ve developed an insurmountable
resentment against the man
ho put him away. But there's
ot a trace.

"I just figured he was a sharp
wyer doing what the system
id him to," Owens said. "I hate
aving done time, and that con-
ction will haunt me the rest of
y life, but John is not the one to
ame.

"I prefer to think John is the
one who got me out."

Parallel thoughts

The irony of their friendship is
ot lost on them.

"Yeah, he's a rich man and
m a poor man. But we're right
ere, close," Owens said, hold-
g up both hands next to each
her. "We don't need to be on
e same side of life to under-
and each other."

Taylor added: "Aaron's a very
ersonable, charming guy who
ved on the wrong side of the
w and got incredibly unlucky
at once."

When asked to unreel their
range legal saga, the men fin-
h sentences for each other.
aving done the TV show rounds
fter Owens was freed, from
"Good Morning America" to
BS News, they're well used to
elling the story.

It began the day before Moth-
r's Day 1972, when two men
rmed with a pistol and a shot-
gun surprised reputed heroin
ealer Stan Bryant and his girl-
riend, Suenette Cook, at their
ockridge home. With Bryant
as Forrest Brown and his 4-
ear-old son.

After arguing about whether
o kill all four, the gunmen let
Brown and his son go, then shot
Bryant and Cook to death.

One of the gunmen was drug
dealer Glenn Bailey, who years
later told a reporter he arranged
the killings because Bryant "dis-
respected me." The other gun-
man, Brown and another witness
later testified, was Aaron Ow-
ens.

"I was very comfortable with
this case. I had good evidence
and good witnesses, and I had no
doubt Aaron did it," Taylor said.
"Just goes to show you — it
takes a good lawyer to convict a
guilty man, but it takes a hell of
a lawyer to convict an innocent
man."

Proof of legal mistakes

When he was arrested, Owens
figured the cops were just lean-
ing on him because he'd beaten a
few drug and robbery raps be-
fore. He'd been buying flowers
for his wife and mother at the
time of the murders, and felt
sure he'd just draw some light
sentence to teach him a lesson.

He believed that until a year
later, when he got two life terms
for first-degree murder.

Reflecting on the sentencing
last week, after double-murder-
er Robert Alton Harris became
the first California prisoner exe-
cuted in 25 years, Taylor said he
never would have asked for a
death sentence.

"In a system where you have
human beings involved, you're
always going to have mistakes,"
he said. "I'm not going to argue
for or against the death penalty
on the whole, but let me just say
this: Aaron is living proof that
legal mistakes can be made."

Owens first went to Folsom
prison, then San Quentin, and he
appealed his case all the way to
the U.S. Supreme Court. Denied
at every level, he thought it
looked hopeless until the 1980
parole hearing where he met
Taylor again.

Owens was denied parole that
day, but as Taylor drove back to
his plush Oakland hills home he
couldn't scrub that epiphanic
moment from his mind.

During the first trial, the two
had exchanged a few words be-
tween proceedings, but it had
been cursory at best. Owens nev-
er testified on the stand, afraid
that evidence showing he had
once owned a shotgun would
damn him.

"Early on, during a recess,
Aaron told me casually that he
hadn't done it, but of course I
thought he was full of it," Taylor

said. "We never had a serious
moment until that parole hear-
ing."

By then, he'd already had a
belly full of 13 years as a DA's
prosecutor and was scheduled to
resign two days later. The
thought that he would leave
without a clean conscience cut
him to the quick.

"I said to my wife when I got
home, 'I don't think that guy did
it,' and she said, 'Well, you'd bet-
ter check it out,'" Taylor said.
So he did. He immediately found
resistance.

"The legal system hates to ad-
mit it made a mistake," he said
recently with a sigh.

Lowell Jensen, who was then
Alameda County District Attor-
ney, told him to lay off, saying he
was just feeling sentimental
about the 35 murder cases he
had so aggressively prosecuted
for the county. Superior Court
Judge Alan Lindsay, who tried
the case, warned Taylor he was
being led on.

Another year's work

Undaunted, Taylor started
dredging up evidence, and the
key came a year later when Ow-
ens' co-defendant, Bailey — who
pleaded innocent but admitted
the killings in prison — wrote
him a letter, saying he would co-
operate.

Bailey never implicated Ow-
ens in the trial, but now figured a
new investigation might get him
a new trial. The man who con-
vinced him of that was Owens,
who'd wrangled himself a San
Quentin cell next to Bailey's so
he could verbally work on him.

Taylor, by then a private at-
torney, got a witness in the geta-
way car to admit she'd lied to
protect the real killers. Taylor
also scared up another witness,
and got photos of the true killer.
It was eerie — Bailey's actual
sidekick was a dead ringer for
Owens: 5-foot-8 with the same
features, right down to mutton-
chop sideburns. That's why
Brown, the man who was spared
at the last minute, had mixed the
two up.

DA Jensen was finally con-
vinced and sent the case back to
Judge Lindsay. On March 6,
1981, he threw out the convic-
tions and Owens walked out a
free man. He had been in county
jail or state prison since Novem-
ber 1972.

Bailey is still doing life in San
Quentin. The other killer, said
Taylor and the DA's office, could
never be prosecuted, because
when they discredited their evi-
dence to free Owens they dis-
credited everything relating to
the second killer.

"I remember to this day the
moment John came to San Quen-
tin and told me I was going to be
a free man," Owens said. He
stared straight-faced at Taylor,
and a lone tear squeezed from
one eye. "I just dropped to my
knees and cried."

Taylor, in turn, said he has no
regrets over having convicted
Owens the first time.

"I was just doing my job," he
said. "The important thing is I
set it right later."

Owens' 78-year-old mother,
Gladys, and his eight siblings
have never forgiven Taylor for
putting Owens in prison, despite
his later efforts, which include
defending him against two mi-
nor bum raps since being freed.
Taylor's wife also takes a dim
view of the two palling around
together.

"It's OK," Taylor shrugged.
"They don't understand, but
we do," Owens added.

While he was behind bars, Ow-
ens' wife divorced him and his
two daughters grew up. That,
plus the toughening that comes
from living in cement and steel,
have left their mark.

"I still have trouble staying
with anything for long — girl-
friend, job, whatever," Owens
said. "And when it feels like I'm
losing it, John can tell."

"He just says, 'Don't . . . me,
man,' and he keeps me on the
straight and narrow. And I re-
spect him because I know his
concern is genuine."

Owens in turn showers unmiti-
gated affection on his buddy.
When Taylor barely lived
through a hideous Oakland car
crash three years ago that cost
him an eye and left him with a
slight speech slur, Owens
"prayed every day for him." And
when Taylor determinedly went
back to work a year later, Owens
urged him on, telling him to
hang tough.

"It was only because John was
such a caring man that I got out
of prison," Owens said, voice
cracking as Taylor looked away
with an embarrassed smile. "I
owe him my life."

"I love the man."